

DRUGS, Inc.

In November 1986, America's most decorated war hero was sent into the notorious "Golden Triangle" to report on missing U.S. prisoners of war.

He returned with evidence of U.S. State Department and C.I.A. involvement in heroin trafficking - on a scale unheard of in criminal history.

This is the first in a series of articles lifting the lid on government involvement in the world's biggest industry -

Drugs Incorporated!

The following is edited from a transcript of Lt Col James "Bo" Gritz addressing the American Liberty Lunch Club, and is taken from the video, "A NATION BETRAYED".

What I want to tell you very quickly is something that I feel is more heinous than the Bataan death march. Certainly it is of more concern to you as Americans than Watergate.

What I'm talking about is something we found out in Burma - May 1987. We found it out from a man named Khun Sa. He is the recognised overlord of heroin in the world. Last year he sent 900 tons of opiates and heroin into the free world. This year it will be 1200 tons

On video tape he said to us something that was most astounding: - that US government officials have been and are now his biggest customers, and have been for the last twenty years. I wouldn't believe him.

We fought a war in Laos and Cambodia even as we fought whatever it was in Vietnam.

The point is that there are as many bomb holes in those two other countries as there are in Vietnam. Five hundred and fifty plus Americans were lost in Laos. Not one of them ever came home. We heard a president say, "The war is over, we are out with honour - all of the prisoners are home." and a few other lies. Now we got rid of that president, but we didn't get rid of the problem.

We ran the war in Laos and Cambodia through drugs. The money that would not be appropriated by a liberal congress, was appropriated. And you know who we used for distribution? Santos Trafficante, old friend of the CIA and mobster out of Cuba and Florida. We lost the war!

Fifty-eight-thousand Americans were killed. Seventy-thousand became drug casualties. In the sixties and seventies you saw an infusion of drugs into America like never was before. Where do you think the Mafia takes the heroin and opiates that it gets through its arrangement with the US government? It doesn't distribute them in Africa or Europe. This is the big money bag here. We're Daddy Warbucks for them.

So I submit to you that the CIA has been pressed for solutions. Each time they have gone to the sewer to find it. And you can't smell like a rose when you've been playing in the cesspool. We've been embracing organised crime. Now you've all looked and heard about Ollie North, about the Contras, about nobody knowing anything.

We have a constitution that says that the laws will be made by the Congress, enforced by the executive branch, interpreted by the judicial branch. But in reality we have an

executive branch that has for more than a twenty years operated in what Ollie North called a parallel government. When the Congress says no, it makes no difference. They're gonna do it anyway. And it is special intelligence - top secret. Why? Not because the communists don't know what were doing, it's to keep it a secret from you.

You're not capable of making those kinds of decisions according to those in parallel government. The reason I know .. I was there. I've been a product of parallel government myself.

The thing that I was most concerned about was - and I thought was fantastic - was the general's offer to stop the flow of opium and heroin into the free world. When I asked him (Tom Harvey) he said "that's fantastic". There was a pause, then he said, "Bo, there's no one here that supports that." And I said, "What?! Vice-President Bush has been appointed by president Reagan as the Number One policeman to control drug entry into the United States. How can you say there's no interest and no support when we bring back a video tape with a direct interview with a man who puts 900 tons of opium and heroin across into the free world every year and is willing to stop it?" And he said, "Bo, what can I tell you? All I can tell you is there is no interest in doing that here."

Well that made me wonder. That's because it doesn't sound American and it doesn't sound right.

That's when we began to do our own investigation because for about three years people had told me, both in Washington DC and, interestingly enough, in Oklahoma city that the whole POW situation was being undermined by US government officials involved in drug trafficking. I wouldn't believe it. I said, "You guys aren't playing with a full deck... you've got yourselves strung out too thin." And

they said, "Bo, you better listen, because for three years we've had prisoners literally within our grasp and something has happened at the last minute." (I said), "Each time I've made every effort to cooperate with government officials. I can't believe that people in the US government would actually, either overtly or covertly, do anything to undermine a rescue operation."

Well, we're still without Prisoners of War and there is no interest, we're told at the White House, in stopping the flow of drugs coming in from the Golden Triangle into the free world.

I've had the opportunity to do a lot of things that other officers have not. I was the first recon chief and intelligence

officer for Delta-Force. I commanded the first guerilla forces that went behind enemy lines. When I commanded Special Forces in Latin America, we did it exactly right. And we did exactly what men in camouflage are supposed to do.

It was very natural that Harold R. Aaron (sp?) would single me out because, besides having a sixth-degree black belt in karate, I have established an ability to operate on my own.

And I think when Aaron said, "Bo, we want you to do this", he understood that I'm also hard headed enough that I wouldn't cave in. He said, "I want you to consider retiring.

It would only be temporary. We have overwhelming evidence now that people are still there, being held in communist prisons."

Mr. H. Ross Perot had been asked by Eugene Tighe, director of the Defence Intelligence Agency, to back a private mission that would look into the POW situation. Perot said, "Bo, I want you to go there. I want you to do everything you have to do. You come and tell me there aren't any pris-

Lieutenant Colonel James 'Bo' Gritz is the most decorated Green Beret commander of the Vietnam era. General William Westmoreland, in writing his memoirs, singled out Bo Gritz as the "American Soldier" for his exemplary courage in combat and outstanding ingenuity in recovering a highly secret black-box the Viet-Cong had taken from a crashed U2 spyplane. The feature films "Rambo", "Uncommon Valour" and "Missing in Action" were based in part upon his real-life military experiences.

Raised by his maternal grandparents in Oklahoma, young Bo Gritz began training at Fort Union Military Academy in Virginia. Gritz won his Green Beret in the Army Special forces by passing all courses in the unconventional warfare training. After graduating from Officer's Candidate school, the newly-commissioned second lieutenant then insisted on Ranger training. Assigned to the command of the first mobile South Vietnamese guerilla forces to be organized, Gritz also operated secretly in Cambodia and Laos with his force of Cambodian mercenaries, or "Bo's", as he called them.

In all Bo Gritz was awarded 62 citations for valour, five Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts and a Presidential Citation.

Bo returned from Indo-China with extensive evidence that there were indeed American prisoners of war in captivity, including a solid report of 47 at one particular camp. Perot turned the project back over to General Tighe who wrote to Secretary of Defence, Harold Brown asking that the source, a Nguyen Dok Jong (sp?) be brought to the United States for a polygraph test. Brown repeated the request to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. One month later, Vance finally responded that the commissioner of immigration would not permit Jong into the United States for further questioning.

As Bo puts it, "Think about it. One man, not a thousand and the defence intelligence agency chief and secretary of state can't get him into the country. That was a pretty clear signal that the military was politically handcuffed on the prisoner of war issue."

For eight years Gritz sought to find and free American POW's. He crossed five times behind enemy lines into communist Laos and Vietnam. Three times he was within moments of embracing those American heroes our government had declared dead. Each time something unexplained caused Gritz and his Operation Lazarus team to fall short with freedom and victory in sight for the POWs.

There has never been a shortage of criticism from any number of armchair generals such as Robert K. Brown of "Soldier of Fortune" magazine who devoted an entire issue to condemning Gritz's efforts. Even to the extent of publishing documents stolen from Bo while he was on the mission in Laos. They have even belittled his prayer before crossing enemy lines.

His critics said he should have looked more like the Rambo in the movies, who actually avoided the draft in an all-girls school in Switzerland. More debilitating than the hundreds of miles on foot within enemy territory has been the disinformation propagated by those within our government who have covered up the plight of our prisoners of war. Gritz has been accused of being a media hound. He insists he has never sought the spotlight, but when confronted has always been a positive voice for our prisoners of war and will continue to be until they are home to speak for themselves.

Working as an agent for the Intelligence Support Activity (ISA) in the CIA, it was fine for Gritz to travel at great peril using false documents, as Ollie North and Bud McFarland did when they travelled to Iran on phony Irish passports. On one occasion he was stopped by US customs at Seattle-Tacoma airport with four separate passports. He was quickly released when his intelligence contact in Washington confirmed his mission. It was quite acceptable with the US government for Bo Gritz to travel at such great peril until he returned from Burma's infamous Golden Triangle on December of 1986 with information concerning with involvement of high-level US officials involved in large-scale drug trafficking in Southeast Asia.

His tremendous courage in refusing to back down to their threats has lead to his current indictment for misuse of a passport in order to keep him from getting this information to the American public.

oners of war left alive."

There's a book out now called Secret Warriors, I think. Its about an organisation called the ISA. Congress never knew about and everybody gives me credit for exposing it, but that's not true. When I was called before Congress in 1983, they said, "Bo, are you working as an official agent for the US government?" And I said, "Yes". And they said, "For what organisation?" And I said, "I will not identify that organisation, other than to call it 'the activity'." This is because even the initials I-S-A were top secret. Because it wasn't an oversight. It was created by Carter. Can you imagine that? He did one good thing that I know of. (laughter) But it was parallel government.

He created a secret organisation to do things that the CIA could not do and he didn't dare let Congress know about it. Now ISA got Dossier back, the general that was captured by terrorists in Italy. And ISA did a lot of other things. You can read about them now because its in this book by some guy who writes for the Wall Street Journal.

The point is that Jerry King was the head of ISA. Jerry King called me on the telephone and said, "Bo, we have been ordered to put operation Grand Eagle...", which was the governments name for the prisoner of war rescue mission, it certainly wasn't grand and it sure wasn't an eagle 'cause it never got off the ground. But he said, "we've been ordered to put operation Grand Eagle on the shelf as if it never existed."

Hand before God he said, "there are still too many bureaucrats that don't want to see American prisoners of war come back alive."

Now I didn't know what Jerry King meant then. I thought he was angry because there was a bureaucratic tug-of-war going on between ISA, the CIA and Defence Intelligence and maybe he was losing. But remember Jerry King's words, 'cause they'll tie in here. I'm wondering why that the Vietnamese intercept Colonel Richard Walsh (a POW..Ed) moments before the turnover and capture not only him, but the General also. And I knew that we still had him, because in the newspapers it appeared that, "The Vietnamese and Lao delegations of the United Nations confirm that they are holding an American citizen in custody." And I said, "By golly, we and our State Department are going to press for an identity." Because doesn't it say that the president is required to safeguard American citizens in hostile hands?

And I knew when we pressed what would happen. Richard Walsh would be identified. Who is he? A prisoner of war. Hooray! Now the log jam is broken. And who can Walsh testify to? The other men he was with. And they can testify. Were going to get them all out now, even though it's going to cost us something. Did you ever see Richard Walsh's name identified? I didn't. Mrs. Walsh showed me a newspaper article that said where a Air Force casualty officer came to her at this time and said, "Your husband is alive. He's a prisoner of war. We have high hopes he'll be coming

home soon."

They put it in the newspaper there in Minneapolis. She was told that Air Force Two was spooling up - who's that belong to? - George Bush - to go get her husband. That's what she told me, but it never happened and I thought again, "What rotten luck and what a bunch of wimps in the State Department for not going and demanding that they identify that citizen."

They probably did. They found out who he was and they said, "lets forget it." Because when I walked into the State Department shortly thereafter, a friend of mine said, "Bo, we thought that you'd been captured. Your passport turned up in a very unlikely place." And I said, "Yeah, I know all about it."

Do you think that all of this has just been rotten luck? Well, when you wear the uniform of the United States you have this faith, hope - that the system will do it. Just like General Aaron said, "Let the system do the rest."

Now comes truth. We were training Afghan freedom fighters in the deserts of South Nevada near where I live and I was proud to do so. In cooperation with the US State Department Office For Security Assistance. We finished that mission. A man by the name of Tom Harvey, who is National Security Council Ollie North look-alike, (Ollie comes from Annapolis, Harvey, comes from West Point).

Tom Harvey called me and said, "We have information ...", and here is a copy of the letter, that's why I brought all these documents, I hope some of you challenge them. I hope the White House, the Pentagon would challenge them, because if they would publicly, they would have to admit to the truth.

This letter was sent to Vice-President Bush by an American citizen by the name of Arthur Soucheck, it is dated 29 August 1986. It says that General Khun Sa has information on American prisoners of war. It says that Khun Sa tried to rescue four of them. It says his forces escorted the four to the Mekong river. While attempting to cross the rain-swollen river, the four US personnel, three of Khun Sa's soldiers and two horses were swept away by the raging water and all drowned.

It goes on to say that Khun Sa has repeated intelligence

reports of the location of US prisoners being kept in Laos ... that he says has seventy prisoners of war. Tom Harvey said, "this is getting TOP priority." Now in G. Gordon Liddy's book, "Will", he says, "no American has ever come out of the Golden Triangle alive." But that's what we were being asked to do.

Tom Harvey said, "Bo, do you think you would be able to infiltrate into Khun Sa's inner sanctum and determine if this report is true or not?"

Do you think maybe somebody is trying to get me bumped off? (laughter) It didn't make any difference. Brothers and sisters, you and I are small compared to this nation and the risk that we take if there is one American there is worth it.

God's will they'll be home while they're still alive. I told Harvey, "We didn't fight a war in Burma, why should there be prisoners of war there?"

But you know a guy like Khun Sa has got connections all over. And I said, "We'll try." I speak Chinese, Khun Sa speaks Chinese. He's right along the southern China border, surrounded by communists. He's fighting the communists. He has a forty-thousand man army. About eight-million Shan people make up the minority Shan state. Burma is communist.

Every one of his weapons are M16s and M60 machine guns. All the latest stuff that we have. I found out why later.

To make a long story short, we got in to see Khun Sa and he didn't have any prisoners of war. And let me caveat it by saying this, - we travelled three days going and three days coming by horse over mountains that were literally vertical up and

down. I made the comment at that time to Scott Weekly(sp?) who was Ollie North's classmate at Annapolis and went with me, I said, "I would hate to be an engineer that had to build a highway through these mountains because they're virgin teak forests - rainforests - tremendously beautiful."

Six days coming and going. Khun Sa didn't have any prisoners of war. We gave Khun Sa the letter from the White House that I had. That's the only thing that let me get in there. You don't walk in because the CIA has a seven digit figure on Khun Sa's head and they haven't been able to collect. You think they're gonna let somebody like me in



Colonel Bo Gritz

there. Say, "Hi! I wanna go visit Khun Sa!" Doesn't work!

But I guess they thought this guy is crazy enough because I gave him this letter ... I told Harvey, "We got to have a credential, guy." He said, "We can't do that, Bo. We never do that." I said, "Harvey, has anyone ever gone to the Golden Triangle and come out alive? I need something that will convince Khun Sa were not there to kill him, we're there for humanitarian purposes." So Harvey said, "Well, this will be the language - 'You are operating in cooperation with the White House, etc .. etc.'" It worked!

Khun Sa didn't have one single prisoner of war, didn't know anything about any prisoners of war.

Now with Nancy Reagan saying no to drugs and Judge Ginsberg not allowed to sit on the supreme court because he smoked marijuana, and you're an accessory to murder if you ever smoke marijuana, according to Nancy Reagan - I figured we'd get an 'attaboy'.

We didn't have prisoners, but we had three video tapes showing Khun Sa himself. And I thought, "Boy, is George Bush gonna be thrilled about this!" (much laughter)

We delivered those tapes to Tom Harvey just before Christmas. You try to call Tom Harvey now, because some news people did, and he doesn't return your calls.

We delivered those tapes just before Christmas. Tom Harvey called me back and said, "Bo, Fantastic! You guys actually got in to see Khun Sa. The CIA said he had been assassinated." Somebody needed some pocket change. "And there he is talking." And I said, "That's right, Tom, what about the 900 tons?" I figured they were just bubbling over. They were all right, they were dripping in their knickers. But it wasn't from joy. Harvey said, "Bo..", these are quotes - hand on the square - he said, "Bo, there's no interest here in that."

You be on the other end of the phone. You've just come out of Burma. You've brought what you consider to be a way to stop 900 tons of heroin, not marijuana, and get rid of the cancer that has infected the bureaucracy and there's "no interest?"

I challenged Harvey because I'm pretty hard-headed. I said, "Tom, didn't President Reagan appoint George Bush the number one cop to stop drugs before they come into the United States?"

I wanted to remind him of these little things. And he said, "Bo, what can I tell you? There is NO INTEREST here in doing that."

Now that is White-House-ese for saying, "Get off this subject, leave us alone." I knew that we had trod upon some very sensitive toes. I still didn't have a clue to what was going on, but I knew that we were getting close to finding

out and I took off and went to Burma again.

Now I want to show you some things when I got back to Burma. (he shows some newspaper headlines) The United States government wanted Khun Sa killed quick and here's how they did it: These are over-there newspaper headlines.

"US CALLS FOR NO MERCY IN DRUG WAR"

"AIRSTRIKES AGAINST KHUN SA'S HEADQUARTERS"
"BURMESE AND THAI TROOPS MOVE ON KHUN SA"

Finally it says, and there is a picture of Burmese and Thai troops standing on top of a high mountain top:

"KHUN SA'S STRONGHOLD SEIZED"

Now many of you are soldiers, airmen, marines, sailors? You know that airstrikes, troops mean war. There's hair, eyes and teeth everywhere.

When I went back into Burma in May I took two other Americans with me. It was the most peaceful area. It was exactly like we left it except for one big change. Remember I told you it took us three days to ride by horse to get there in November and come out in December. Well, when we went in May, we went by pickup truck.

Straight from the Thai border all the way right to the General's front door. And on the other way coming back there were Thai military 10 ton trucks covered and loaded. There's only one thing that comes out of the Golden Triangle and that's heroin.

When we got there General Khun Sa said, "What took you so long?" I said, "General, I was waiting for the war to die down. I didn't want to get caught in all of this 26,000 troops and airstrikes", and he just laughed. He said, "That was a newspaper war!" I

said, "What do you mean newspaper war?" He said, "The Thai and Burmese came to me and said that if they don't make it look like there doing something, they stand to lose tens of millions of dollars this year in drug suppression funds from American taxpayers." So Khun Sa said, "Make it look like anything you want to, but I want a road built here."

They used the newspapers and I want to show you something. This one here says,

"US PROVIDES ANOTHER 1.8 MILLION TO FIGHT DRUGS"

So it worked! And this guy is really smiling. This is a Thai receiving a check from the US Ambassador. Khun Sa got what he wanted.

Now he began to assemble his officers. It took him a week to get them all together because he brought them from all over the place. And now I understand why. I thought I was just going to talk to him, but he said no and put me off for a week. He assembled officers from the entire Shan ter-

You be on the other end of the phone. You've just come out of Burma. You've brought what you consider to be a way to stop 900 tons of heroin, not marijuana, and get rid of the cancer that has infected the bureaucracy and there's "no interest?"

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ritory from all over the Golden Triangle. They came in. He sat everybody down. He brought his secretary out. He had his secretary read from their log.

Bo: I cannot ask the General to cut your throat by revealing any contact that would hurt your economy at this moment. But I pray that he will reveal any connections from the older time or that will not hurt you now. That if they are still in power, we might be free of them.

Khun Sa: Some of the connections I can expose to you. Some were in Burma, somewhere in Thailand, some were in America. But I don't remember all of their names and my secretary remembers them so he will give you the information.

Secretary: In 1965 to 1975 there is one CIA in Laos, his name was Shakley. He was involved the narcotics business. And we know that Shakley used one civilian to organise trafficking. His civilian name was Santos Trafficante. He was the organiser of trafficking for Shakley. This was financed by Richard Armitage who stayed in Vietnam. After the Vietnam war Richard Armitage was a prominent trafficker in Bangkok. This was between 1975 to 1979 he was a very active trafficker in Bangkok. He was one of the embassy employees. Then after that in 1979 he quit from embassy and then

he established a company name the Far East Trading company. Then he used the name of his company under the table for drug trafficking. He then used the drug money to support the Lao anti-communist troops.

Bo: So he used it in arms and munitions?

Secretary: Yes. This Richard Armitage has a lot of friends in Laos and Thailand. There is a lot of CIA personnel in Laos. One of the CIA agents is named Daniel Arnold. This Arnold was a munitions trafficker. There is another one Jerry Daniels who organised trafficking for Richard Armitage.

One of the men named by Khun Sa, this is not me naming him - this is Khun Sa the drug overlord reading from his records, was Richard Armitage, - named as being a chief drug trafficker from 1965 through 1979!

You know where Richard Armitage went in 1979? He went to Dole's staff, then to Reagan's campaign staff and now he is the Assistant Secretary of Defence right underneath Mr. Carlucci. Richard Armitage has been responsible for recovery of US prisoners of war way back before we actually got involved with H. Ross Perot. He is still responsible for them. What I'm trying to do is find you Khun Sa's

Continued on page 67

DRUGS, Inc.

Continued from page 45

letter because it will say it best. Here it is:-

Letter from Khun Sa written to the US Justice department dated 28 Jun 1987. I just want to read you a couple of sentences.

"During the period 1965 to 1975, CIA chief in Laos Theodore Shakley, was in the Drug Business."

Now Theodore Shakley would have been director of intelligence of the CIA if George Bush had not been appointed to that post. Theodore Shakley was then posted as the deputy director for covert operations.

It said, "Santos Trafficante acted as his buying and transporting agent while Richard Armitage handled the financial section with banks in Australia."

All of a sudden the words from Jerry King came back, - "too many bureaucrats don't want to see American pris-

oners returned alive."

Why? Couldn't figure it out. Gunboat at midnight in the middle of the Mekong with Voice of America saying we're there to abort our attack. Walsh and the General recaptured before turnover.

Why? Now I'll tell you why. If this is true it means Richard Armitage and a lot of other people that are named here are the least men in the world that want to see Americans come home.

Because when American prisoners of war do come home, whether we bring them home or they drag themselves across that Mekong river somehow, and report to the US Embassy and aren't destroyed there. When they do come home, because they will, there will be one hell of an investigation as to what took the greatest nation in the world so long to bring home heroes that have been waiting for more than fifteen years. When that investigation is con-

ducted it will show as Khun Sa says that these men, these bureaucrats, appointed not elected, appointed, have broken the faith with you and this country and its law. Have used their office as a cover to run drugs and arms to promote covert operations that the United States Congress did not approve of.

Its the parallel government. Now that may be all right, but I'll tell you something. It's not all right to leave hundreds of Americans to die alone in the hands of the enemy to a bunch of wimps that were never there.

When I came back here, I thought I was a lone ranger. I said, "Boy, I've got this information. Somehow we've got to get it to the proper authorities and I'm all alone.

More of the Bo Gritz material will be found in the next issue of Nexus Magazine.